

I'm an adjunct, so I have no job security. I rely on my positive student evaluations and departmental reputation to get another semester's work.



It feels weird to say that I'm "closeted", since I've been out to everyone else in my life for years. But at work, I simply don't bring up my sexuality.

Some call it cowardice, a refusal to live authentically. Whose authenticity, though?

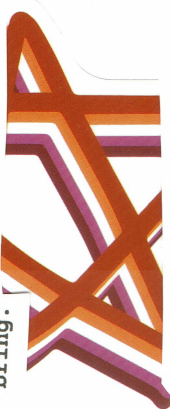
Is it really a one-time thing for most of us, or we come out to different degrees to different people?

And here I am, as upbeat as I can be at a 9:30 class, teaching. Business as usual. Slides, vocabulary, discussion.

I'm teaching in the shadow of the 2024 election, hatred of queer people and academics on the rise. I stay up at night wondering if my friends and community will survive the global rightwing lean, if my girlfriend will be able to access healthcare, if we will be able to get married, when we're ready. I plan next semester's syllabus wondering if the next student complaining about my curriculum will get a sympathetic ear this time.

I don't need to be identifiable as a lesbian to be personally validated, but I know how much visible lesbians meant to me growing up, and it feels selfish not to be able to pass on that

sense of safety and hope that a visible out-and-proud dyke can bring.



I think about femmes who came before me, who held down office jobs, taking advantage of their invisibility for security for themselves and their butches.



It's lesbian day of visibility and I'm feeling particularly invisible, teaching college students from the closet.



And talked about their girlfriend to their friends before class started



I had a student who often wore a lesbian flag striped sweater

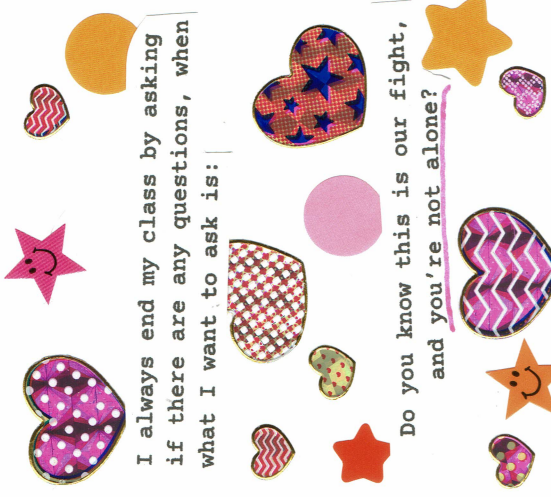
Some things have changed since the 40s and 50s, but what is old is new again, so I'm the goth femme lesbian dyke in suburbanite drag, waiting to go home to her butch or out to the lesbian bar nights to be myself.

I've been found out before. A student came up to us out-of-the-blue at a lesbian event at a local brewery. It was fine this time, will it be fine next time?

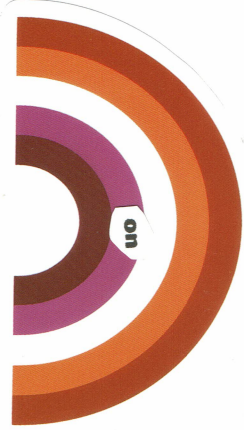
There are acts of solidarity I can show from my closet. I do what I can. I'm riskier with my curriculum than I am with my personal identity, and that feels right to me.

I always end my class by asking if there are any questions, when what I want to ask is:

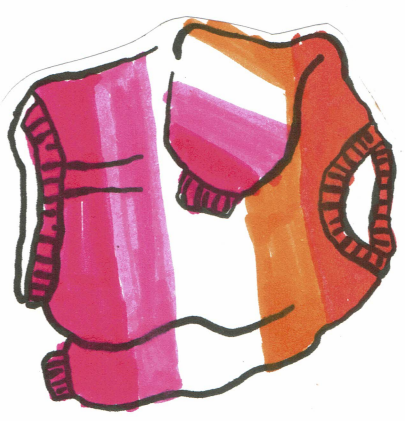
Do you know this is our fight, and you're not alone?



Lesbian Day of Visibility



Teaching from the Closet



@VampFemmezines

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